

Course Prospectus

For THL 350 Principles of Counseling and Conflict Resolution

Contents

OVERVIEW	2
Course description	2
Prerequisites & Corequisites	2
Course Credit	2
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	2
YOUR INSTRUCTOR	2
COURSE PROTOCOLS	3
Technology access	3
Students with disabilities	3
Attendance in this online course	3
Withdrawing from or dropping this course	3
Course evaluation	4
TEXTBOOKS	4
COURSE REQUIREMENTS	4
Due dates and extensions	4
Icebreaker assignment	4
Reading assignments	5
Viewing assignments	5
Discussion forums	5
Writing assignments	5
Mid-term exam	7
GRADING	7
ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY	8
COURSE OUTLINE	8

OVERVIEW

This course is intended to expose the student to biblical or Christian-based counseling. This course is just an introduction and in no way is intended to completely prepare the student for a career in counseling or any type of licensure. The topics covered are intended to help the student better understand how the human mind works and interacts with its environment. It will also provide the student with basic information on various counseling issues, and help the student develop some basic techniques to assist in counseling.

Course description

This course focuses on the philosophy and techniques of biblically-based counseling including interpersonal, premarital, marital, family counseling, addiction counseling, and biblical conflict resolution. Topics include the nature and principles of biblically-based counseling, techniques and theories of counseling; patterns of problem solving, the counselor and counselee relationship; the applicability of Scripture; and biblical conflict resolution. Upon completion a student should be able to understand and discuss multiple issues applicable to counseling and demonstrate the basic techniques of biblically-based counseling.

Prerequisites & Corequisites

None

Course Credit

Three (3) semester hours

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

As a result of participating in THL 350, students will be able to:

1. Understand and define the differences between psychology, counseling, Christian counseling, and conflict resolution.
2. Be able to identify the differences between the biology, psychology, sociology, and theology of human behavior.
3. Develop a basic understanding of how to assess valid research in psychology, counseling, and Christian counseling.
4. Identify and articulate the strengths and weaknesses of modern psychology and counseling.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of biblical counseling principles and techniques.
6. Develop a basic understanding of a variety of Christian counseling topics.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

The instructor for this course is Dr. Scott D. Winnail, MSPH, Ph.D.



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Phone: 704-708-2292

You may email your instructor with any questions or thoughts. When doing so, be sure to include *THL 350* in the subject line of your email. This will allow your instructor to know that the email is a course matter and enable him to tend to your email accordingly. Your instructor may take two to three days to respond to emails due to responsibilities outside of Living University requiring him to travel frequently. At the very least, an email acknowledging received email will be sent, time permitting.

COURSE PROTOCOLS

Technology access

This course requires web access and the student also has to have an established email account. The following free ware may be useful in this course.

- *Adobe Acrobat Reader* is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. It may be downloaded **for free** at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>, which may then be installed and used to access PDF documents on the course website.

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities have a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor by email (on the course “Info” page click on the instructor’s name and then select “Send Email”).

Attendance in this online course

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary for students to derive maximum benefit from a course and to maintain a satisfactory academic record, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time, as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.”

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before “Last day to withdraw from a course” without a grade penalty as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of “W” for it. After that date, the grade will be a “WF” and counted in a student’s GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student’s class attendance or punctuality endangers the student’s success or places other students at risk.

Withdrawing from or dropping this course

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar’s Office in writing. Please note the following:

- If a student drops a course on or before the “Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty” as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a “W” is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of “W” if passing (not computed in GPA) or “WF” if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of “WF.”
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be given a grade of “W” on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of “W” or “WF” for the course depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw will be assigned a grade of “W” for the course.

Course evaluation

We welcome your input for improving this course. Making suggestions to us by email is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make distance-learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning your experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate your letting us know how we can improve our products and services for you and other distance learners.

TEXTBOOKS

Required textbooks for this course are:

Collins, G.R. *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers: Relating the Basic Teachings of Scripture to People's Problems*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2001. (ISBN 9781576830819).

Collins, G.R. *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*. 3rd ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. (ISBN 9781418503291).

Meier, P.D., F.B. Minirth, F.B. Wichern, and D.E. Ratcliff. *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling: Christian Perspectives and Applications*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. (ISBN 9780801039324).

OPTIONAL TEXTS (for use as personal reference tools)

Kruis, J.G. *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000. (ISBN 9780801091025).

-This text lists counseling topics (E.G.: anger, anxiety, conscience, death, divorce, drug abuse, homosexuality, hot temper, marriage, priorities, rape, etc.), and then lists scriptures that directly pertain to the counseling topic. A great tool to quickly identify scriptures related to counseling topics.

Adams, J.E. *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. (ISBN 9780310511502).

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Additional readings will come primarily from church literature. The appropriate web links will be designated on the course website, and may also include other secular sources.

NOTE: Required texts and other outside readings have been chosen because of their “overall” value and relation to the course. Students should keep in mind that these sources are “secular” and although very good in many ways, not all the ideas shared by the authors are biblically accurate or even acceptable in God’s Church. The instructor will attempt to point out major errors, but ultimately the student must “sift” through the material gleaning the wise and godly elements, and dismissing the inappropriate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Due dates and extensions

Submit assignments **on** or **before** the date due. **No** late or make-up assignments will be allowed except for extreme circumstances (permission of instructor is necessary). Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

Icebreaker assignment

All students are required to post a brief biography to the forum **by Friday** of the first week of class. In your forum post, briefly answer the following questions:

Course Prospectus THL 350 – Principles of Counseling and Conflict Resolution

- a. What is your name and the Church area that you attend?
- b. How long you have been part of/attending the church?
- c. Why you are taking this particular course and what you hope to learn?
- d. Have you have taken any other Living University courses?

Please limit your comments to 200 words, and be sure to comment back to at least two of your classmates. The assignment is worth **20 points**.

Reading assignments

Students will be responsible for the chapter readings that correspond with the class lecture. Be sure to read the chapter prior to logging in and completing the weekly assignment. Readings will correspond with in-class assignments and will help you be better informed. Completing the readings in advance will make the assignments make more sense to you!

Viewing assignments

Course lectures will take the format of both video and audio. PowerPoint slides will also periodically be available for download with some lectures. These slides will appear in PDF format. See the course website for details.

Discussion forums

Each week there will be forum question posted by the instructor. Minimal participation requires one posting in response the weekly question, and reply postings to at least one of your classmate's comments. Make sure that your "comments" are more than merely "personal opinion." Your comments should be grounded in your chapter readings, lecture notes, and based on scripture. Re-posts and additional comments or questions are also encouraged. Be sure to keep the discussions positive and helpful. These weekly discussions are very important and are designed to reinforce the weekly content in a unique way, so it is important to participate in the discussions. Class participation points will be assigned in accordance with your level participation, and will be a combination of student and instructor input. There are **50 points** possible. Please note that these discussion posts will add to the interactivity of the class, allow you to know what you fellow classmates are thinking, and also get to know your classmates better. The more you are engaged in these class discussions, the more you will learn from of the course and the more you will enjoy it.

Writing assignments

There are two brief topical papers and four additional activities due in this course. Writing assignments should follow the MLA style as set forth in *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* (14th edition) by Lester & Lester. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed.

TWO Brief Topical Papers (50 points each): You will be expected to do two short research papers on counseling related to a specific need area. Using your Christian Counseling text by Collins, possibly your Intro to Psychology and Counseling text by Meier et al., and other sources, identify two different areas of counseling that you discovered through your ministerial interview that are pressing issues for God's people. Try to avoid the areas covered in lectures for this course, and rather, focus on two "other" areas. This paper need only be 3-5 pages in length and should cover the following areas:

- Clearly identify the counseling or problem area to be examined.
- Give some background on the issue/area, including predisposing factors or causes, factors that contribute to or worsen the situation, and "frequency" of the situation in the general population.
- Identify counseling strategies frequently used to successfully deal with this issue. Specifically identify "Christian" counseling methods.
- Identify biblical principles and specific scriptures that directly address the issue. How would God look at and deal with this issue?
- Identify other resources that may be available to help support a person facing this issue.
- Summarize what you have learned about this issue and what stands out in your mind.
- Be sure to use a reference list and properly cite sources within your paper.

FOUR Additional Activities (50 points each): You are free to complete these Activities and turn them in at any time prior to and up to the date due. These Activities are designed to get you to think further on particular topics and issues related to class. Activities should be typed and double spaced according to MLA standards. All should be 2-3 pages in length.

A. Ministerial Counseling Interview: For this assignment, make an appointment to interview your pastor. If you are the pastor, contact your regional pastor or another long-time minister. You will be interviewing this person to find out essentially what lessons he has learned in counseling people over the years. Be sure to let him know ahead of time what you want to talk to him about. You are encouraged to speak to this minister either “in person”, on the phone, or via something like Skype. Try to avoid just emailing questions and asking for a response – this method is both impersonal and more time consuming for the minister you are asking feedback from. Be sure use the following questions in your interview. You may add more if you like. In your “write up” of this assignment, be sure to clearly articulate the questions and answers, as well as address the additional questions at the end regarding your experience.

- How long has this person served in the ministry?
- What training (if any), did this person receive in counseling prior to coming into the ministry?
- How has this minister increased his skill in counseling?
- What counseling issues does he see most frequently?
- In his experience, what “changes” has he seen in counseling issues? Put another way, are there issues today that are any different from issues, say, 10 or 20 years ago? If so, why?
- What major lessons has this man learned over his years of counseling God’s people?
- What advice does this person have related to Christian counseling?
- (For the interviewer): As you write up this assignment, what are the major things/lessons you learned from this interview?
- (For the interviewer): Did anything you heard make you think differently about Christian counseling?

B. Listening Activity: Listening is a key skill for any socially functional person, and especially a person providing wise and godly counsel. You cannot provide poignant feedback that is “on topic,” unless you learn to listen critically, carefully, and completely. For this activity, identify an important person in your life that you interact with regularly. Set aside a two-week period in which you will practice implementing your new found listening skills in your relationship with this person. Consciously work to apply these skills and see what you learn. Review the skills at the website: <http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/soft-skills/project-management-training-part5.html>. Print this page and review it about every-other-day. At the end of two weeks, write up your experience according to the following questions. Your write up should be 2-3 pages in length.

- What is your relationship to the person you practiced your listening skills on?
- How long have you known this person?
- Prior to the activity, on a scale of 1-5 with one being worst and five being best, how would you rank your listening skills when you interacted with this person? Explain, along with areas of weakness you saw in your listening skills with this person.
- During this activity period (about two weeks), are there any aspects of listening that you specifically honed in on?
- At the end of the activity period, how would you rank your listening skills with this person (on the same scale of 1-5)? Why?
- Did your relationship with this person change any during this time period, and while you focused on listening better?
- What are your overall thoughts about this activity, and more importantly, the power of actively paying attention to how you listen?

C. Community Resources Investigation: One of the keys to being a successful Christian counselor is knowing your limitations and when to refer. Some situations require intense and longer term counseling that a local minister or family member or friend just does not have. Or they can require a level of skill and training that most do not have (for example, addiction counseling). For this reason, a good counselor needs to be aware of community resources and services that are available to assist in the case that referral is necessary. But not all resources will give the type of counseling that fits with God’s way of life. For this activity, identify three community resources or programs that offer counseling in an area that you may not have a lot of experience or expertise working with – perhaps alcohol or tobacco addiction, marriage crisis counseling, suicide ideation, or another area. If you are a minister living far from brethren, identify three resources in a community that is more “central” to one of your congregations. The internet will be very helpful in doing this, as will be the phone book. You may want to call a representative of the agency and interview them briefly in order to see what they really do offer and what their fees are like. Write up a 3-5 page paper summarizing your experience. This activity is designed to become a resource for the future. Your paper should include in its summary of each resource, the following information:

1. Name of agency/resource
2. Type of counseling provided
3. Type of training the professionals have
4. Fee structure for counseling
5. Whether the counseling is Christian-based
6. Any other comments or notes you want to add
7. You should end your paper with a brief paragraph describing your overall experience and perspective of this activity.

D. Personal Philosophy on Christian Counseling: You are to write up a personal philosophy about biblical or Christian counseling. This document should be about 3-4 pages, double spaced and according to MLA format. It should give a brief definition (in your own words), of what biblical counseling is, related to counseling in general (or in “the world”). In this philosophy, you should share who you believe should be involved in this practice, what it entails, and what makes biblical counseling unique. Ultimately, you should share what you believe to be God’s expectations regarding counseling...something quite different from what the world expects.

Mid-term exam

A mid-term will be given during the middle week of the semester (**100 points**). The exam will be comprehensive and review all the material covered to that point in the semester. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It will be open book and open note book, so NO PROCTOR is required. Students are NOT however permitted to discuss exam questions and issues while taking the exam. IMPORTANT: It is “highly recommended” that the student prepare for this exam by studying ahead of time. Although the exam will not be timed, preparing for the exam will help the student expedite the exam taking process and greatly shorten its duration.

GRADING

The following grade schedule lists assignments and point totals. It also lists the point totals that are necessary to achieve respective letter grades.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS	POINT VALUE		Letter Grade	Total Points
Icebreaker	20		A	423 or more points
Two Brief Topical Papers (50 points each)	100		B	376-422 points
Four Activities (50 points each)	200		C	329-375 points

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS	POINT VALUE		Letter Grade	Total Points
Class Participation/Discussion Forum	50		D	282-328 points
Mid-Term Exam	100		F	281 points or below
Total	470			

ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another’s ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were your own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned. In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members are authorized to refuse to grade such papers, in whole or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure. If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TOPICS:

Week	Topics
1	Course Introduction
2	Who and What is a Christian Counselor?
3	Psychology and Behavior
4	Biology and Behavior
5	Emotions and Motivation
6	The Bible, the Church, and Counseling
7	Legal, Ethical and Moral Issues
8	Basic Counseling Skills and Strategies
9	Multicultural Issues & Seeking Advice
10	Power of Sin, Satan and Demons - Guilt & Forgiveness
11	Depression and Suicide
12	Marriage Counseling
13	Addictions and Crisis & Trauma Counseling
14	Conflict Management & Baptismal Counseling
15	Course Wrap-Up